

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

ELECTION & THE ELECTIONS

By Pastor Brian De Jong

God is in charge! We say that, we know that, we believe that, and we forget that. But God is in charge!

To remind the Israelites of His overarching and enduring sovereignty, God tells his servant Jeremiah that “*At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. “Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.*” (Jeremiah 18:7-10)

As surely as God was sovereign over Israel and Babylon in the days of Jeremiah, He is sovereign over our nation today. He is the one who plants and He is the one who uproots. He establishes and He destroys. Modern America cannot afford to forget this one simple fact: God is in charge!

As an exercise of His sovereignty, God calls men and nations to obey His holy laws. He requires righteousness from individuals and from entire societies. If a kingdom will not live according to God’s commands, it risks provoking God’s wrath and curse.

If God’s judgment comes against a nation – if He determines to uproot a kingdom – they have two choices. Either they can repent from their iniquity and

turn from their evil. Such a course may lead to God relenting concerning the calamity He had in store for that nation.

On the other hand, they can press forward with “business as usual.” Such a course will result in their overthrow. God is in charge!

A second scenario spells out the same implications: if God determines to plant a nation or build up a kingdom – and they do evil by not obeying His voice – God may retract the good He had intended. They will languish and crumble because they chose a course of disobedience to God. God is in charge!

On Tuesday, November 6, Americans will go to the polls to choose their leaders for the years ahead. At the top of the ticket is the presidential race – viewed by many as a stark choice between two different directions. What will happen? Who will prevail? We will know in the wee hours of Tuesday or when we wake up on Wednesday.

Whatever happens, and whoever wins – God is in charge! He is the one who plants and He is the one who uproots. Whether we have a democratic or republican administration in Washington DC, God continues unmoved in His enduring sovereignty. Jesus Christ remains King of kings and Lord of lords. To Him every knee must and shall bow, confessing that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

So you may ask, “If God is in charge, should I even bother to vote?” The answer is “Yes, most definitely!” Go and...

Continued on the Back Page

Volume 7, Issue 11

November 2012

Inside this issue:

<i>Pastor’s Article</i>	1
<i>Wandering Thoughts by Richard Steele</i>	2-4
<i>Pine Haven at Firehouse Pizza</i>	4
	5
<i>Directory Addition</i>	5
<i>November Birthdays</i>	6
<i>Thank You</i>	6
<i>November Calendar</i>	7
<i>Comments on Finance by Joel Moody</i>	8-9
<i>Apple Valley Men’s Retreat</i>	9
<i>There Is A Reason by Daniel De Master</i>	10-11
<i>Crafts Needed!!</i>	12
<i>Harvest Home</i>	12
<i>Recipe Corner</i>	13
<i>Front Page Concluded</i>	14
<i>Spurgeon Corner</i>	14

Mnemonics...

- *Harvest Home Supper, 10th*
- *Thanksgiving Service, 21st*

A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 3

by Richard Steele

To Attend on the Lord without Distraction is our Duty.

SECTION I

THE POSSIBILITY OF IT.

In the third place I shall prove, that to attend upon the Lord without distraction is our duty which will clearly follow by demonstrating, 1. The possibility of it; 2. The necessity of it.

First, It is possible thus to serve our God. The sluggard, it is true, finds a lion in his way to every duty, and nothing is possible, because nothing is welcome. — There is no duty so easy, but it is difficult to the negligent; none so hard, but it is easy through divine grace to the diligent. Perfection herein I assert not; but that we may attain it in the substance and sincerity thereof, is proved:

1. From the precept of God. The wise and merciful God commands nothing, but he finds or makes it possible; his commands are not snares, but rules, yea and helps. When a master commands, power and assistance wait not on his commands; the servant's strength must perform the master's will: but here are the commands of a father, which when they outstrip his child's strength, are still accompanied with his own assistance; and the chair which the weak child cannot bring in, he helps to fetch himself. Now behold the divine precept, "Serve Him in truth with all your heart." 1 Sam. 12:24. What truth is there, while we appear to serve the Lord, and indeed do not think upon him at all! Or how is that with all the heart, while there is not half, nor any thereof many times! While we can pray, and plot, and think, and look, and begin our devotion only at the end of the duty. Our merciful Father will not impose an impracticable law upon us. It may by accident become impossible, but it is not so in itself.

2. In regard of the power of God it is possible. Ours is the duty, but his is the strength. God and his servant can do any thing. When you look on a hard task, and your heart fails you, raise your eye of faith,

and you will find God the strength of your heart; "I can do all things through Christ that strengthened me," Phil. 4:13: lo, here the omnipotency of a worm! If all things, that is all my duty, then this among the rest. But you will say, This was an apostle, a person of great strength and grace: yet still the acts were from the man, but the strength was from Christ; for the same person saith, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Cor. 3:5. Who, though he be at the same time terrible out of his holy places, and darts his curses on them that do his work negligently, yet "the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power to his people, blessed be God." Psalm 18:35. He gives, that is, he is ready to give it out; but, alas! his stock lies almost dead by him; and few sue to him in good earnest. His power is at your service, and therefore serve yourselves of it.

3. In regard of the promises of God, this is possible. To every command there is a promise.* The command finds us work, the promise finds us strength. As to this, some think that clause in our magna charta, Ezek. 11:19, of one heart, is intended this way; wherein the Lord promiseth an united heart to his servants. A hypocrite hath more hearts than one; a heart for his pleasures, a heart for his pride, here and there his affections are straggling; now saith God I will give one heart. There is another promise, "I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;" Jer. 32:40; neither in whole nor in part, unless the fault be in yourselves. Now these promises are amen in Christ, and do belong to every soul that is in Christ, who may claim and have the benefit of them.

4. Add hereunto the experience of many servants of God, who by a habit of holy watchfulness, have attained to considerable strength against these wanderings. Hope of relief makes many complain of their distractions, when fear of pride hinders them from divulging their attainments; and that which by the grace of God is possible for others, with the same grace is possible for you.

Wandering Continued...

SECT. II

THE NECESSITY OF IT

Secondly, it is necessary, and therefore no doubt our duty, to attend on God without distractions. It not only may be done, but must be done. You will say, they are happy that can do it, but they may be safe enough that cannot; thus the heart and substance of religion is counted a high attainment but not a duty. I shall show therefore that this soul-attendance on the Lord is necessary.

1. It is necessary to the essence or being of the duty. As the soul is necessary to the being of a man, the body is no man, but a corpse without it even so a solemn duty with a wandering heart, is but a corpse of a duty. "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens." Lam. 3:41. The elevation of the hands signifies nothing, without lifting up the heart with them. If prayer be the lifting up of the heart, what are words without the heart? A man may spend the same time and the same words in a serious and in a heartless duty, and yet the latter stand for nothing for want of intensesness and attention. "There is none that calleth on thy name because none stirreth up himself to take hold on thee." Isaiah 14:7. If a man come to the service of God, and do not excite and stir up his soul to exercise grace, as a man will blow a dull fire, his faith, zeal, and humility; if he do not blow them up, but suffer his heart to run at random, the holy God counts all the rest as a cipher without a figure, it stands for nothing.

2. It is necessary to comfort in the duty. The service of God is a sweet pot of ointment of a most refreshing odour; the gracious soul is refreshed therein as a bed of spices. Distractions are the dead flies, Eccles. 10:1, which dropping into this sweet ointment, cause it to send forth a noisome smell, displeasing to God and unpleasing to the soul. Where can the soul be better than with God? what sweeter company than that

which angels keep, or pleasanter employment than conversing in heaven? But wandering thoughts arise, and like a black cloud quite hide the sweet beams of that Sun of Righteousness from the soul, and then your comfort is gone. The sweetness of music consists in its harmony; when the strings are out of tune, or un-tunably touched, it is but a harsh sound, there is no music: wandering thoughts are like strings out of tune, there is no music in that duty, the Holy Ghost goes away and likes it not; and the soul likes it not, is weary of it; there is no sweetness in that duty. It is a tried maxim,

"...wandering thoughts are like strings out of tune, there is no music in that duty..."

The more seriousness, the more sweetness; the nearer to God, the warmer and merrier is the soul, which inward comfort is some reward to the heart of a Christian, when his particular suit is denied; so that "in keeping of God's commandments there is a great reward." The choicest of the Spirit's sealing comforts are bestowed in the lively service of God.

3. It is necessary to the prosperity of a duty. * "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psam. 16:8. In God's service the soul should be regarding God alone. If I regard a corruption, instead of Christ, if when some vain object presents itself, I turn my back on God to treat with vanity, the Lord will not hear me, nor regard me. We read of the holy Hannah, that "she spake in her heart, only her lips moved not, her voice was not heard;" 1 Sam. 1:13; yet this wordless prayer did the business; lip-labour, if no more, is but lost labour. The earnestness and labouring of the heart prevails. The Lord our God hath a book of remembrance for them that think on his name, while he turns the deaf ear to them that cry, Lord, Lord, and do not inwardly adore him. In short, thus saith the Lord God, "Every man," child or not child, "that setteth up his idols in his heart, and cometh to the prophet," or sits demurely before the preacher, "I the Lord will answer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his idols." Ezek. 14:4. He that sets his heart on vanity, vanity shall be his recompense; if he will not affect his own heart, he shall never affect

Wandering Concluded...

mine. * He that withdraws his heart in asking, will find the Lord to withdraw his hand in giving what he asks.

4. It is necessary to communion with Jesus Christ in a duty. Which, though it be a paradox to unregenerate men, is the very business and next end of the worship of God; which, if you lose, that duty is lost. Jesus Christ calls, * “my dove, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.” Cant. 2:14. Now if, when he waits thus to be gracious, you wait not for his grace, nor watch for the blessed appearances of the Holy Ghost, you will lose that happiness, you will lose your labour, and at length your souls. How are you troubled, if you are abroad when some good customer comes to your shop: it troubles you when that is bestowed on another which was intended for you. Sirs, the Spirit of God is a good customer, and when he comes and you are away, you are absent to your loss; and therefore keep at home the next time.

How unmannerly would it be for the subject to knock at his prince's chamber, and, knowing he is

within, and waits for him, step away about some frivolous trifle when he hath done? The prince appears, opens his royal door, and calls; but the foolish man is gone. How fairly may he shut his door against such a guest, and make him wait in attendance long before he sees his face? Ah, how seldom do we see the face of God in an ordinance, or much endeavour to do so! “My soul followeth hard after thee,” or, as in the Hebrew, “is glued to thee.” — Psalm 13:8. That soul, and that alone, that follows hard after God, by the earnest intenseness of zeal and love, and which cannot be content without him, that heart shall cleave to him, and have rare communion with him.

Thus you may plainly see, that to attend upon the Lord without distraction is a duty, which was the third point to be handled.

+ Compare Deut. 10: 16, with chap. 30:6; and so 1 John, 2:27, 28.

* As long as Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed, and no longer.

Pine Haven at Firehouse Pizza

The Pine Haven Christian Home Auxiliary will be hosting a Fund Raiser Event at Fire House Pizza in Sheboygan Falls on Tuesday, November 6th from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Proceeds will go to benefit residents at the Pine Haven Christian Home Communities. Come eat some delicious pizza & support a great cause!



Directory Addition



November Birthdays



Thank You

Dear friends of Grace Church,

Thank you for welcoming Eyob to our church family . Your words of advice, love and acceptance have been very encouraging. Thanks also, for the many gifts as we set up our home to accommodate a 10 year old boy! We treasure all the love we feel from your welcoming arms!

Chris, Sandy, and Eyob

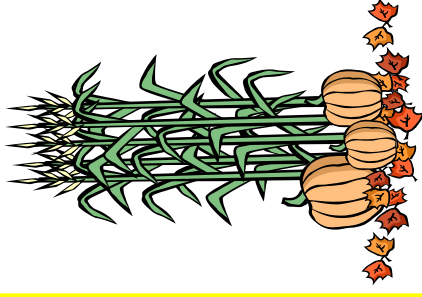




Grace OPC

November 2012

*Showing forth the
excellencies of
Jesus Christ*



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Theology Class, 3:30 p.m.</i>	6 Pine Haven at Fire House Pizza (Falls) 4-8 p.m.	7 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	8	9	10 Harvest Home Supper, 5:30 p.m.
11 Missions Sunday	12 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	13 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	14 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	15	16	17
18	19 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Theology Class, 3:30 p.m.</i>	20	21 Thanksgiving Service, 7:00 p.m.	22	23	24
25 Lord's Supper, (a.m.)	26 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	27	28 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	29	30	

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Comments on Finances

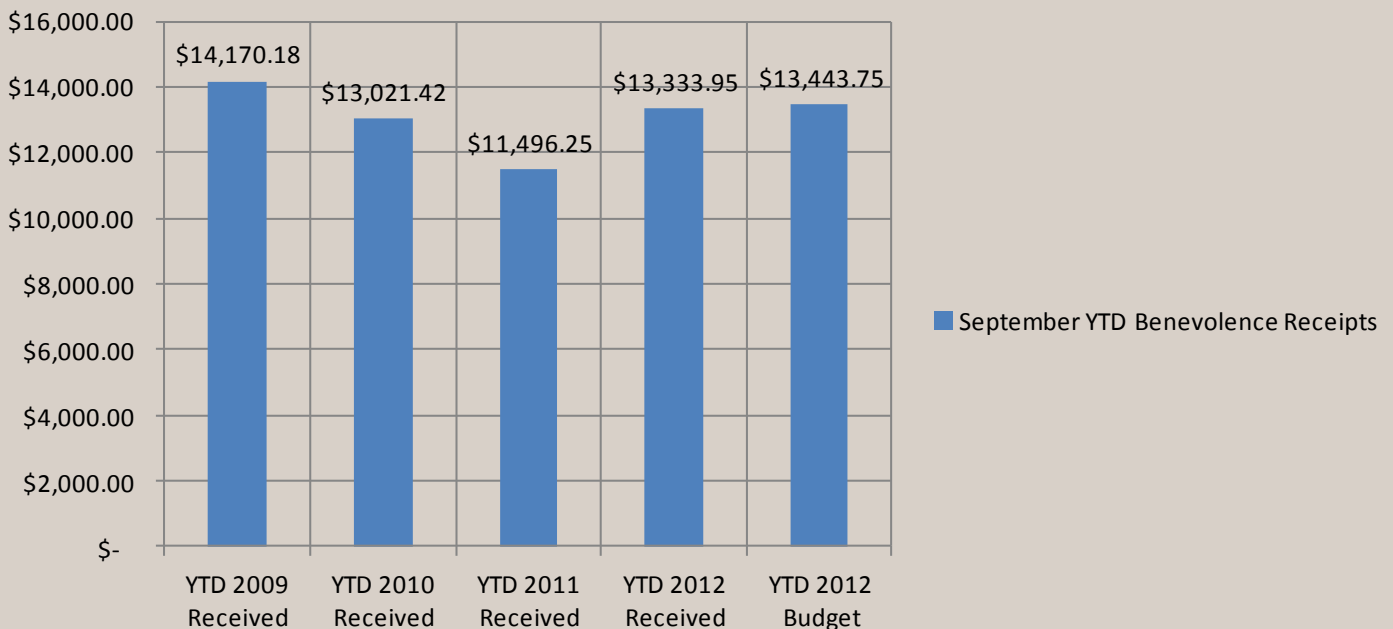
by Joel Moody

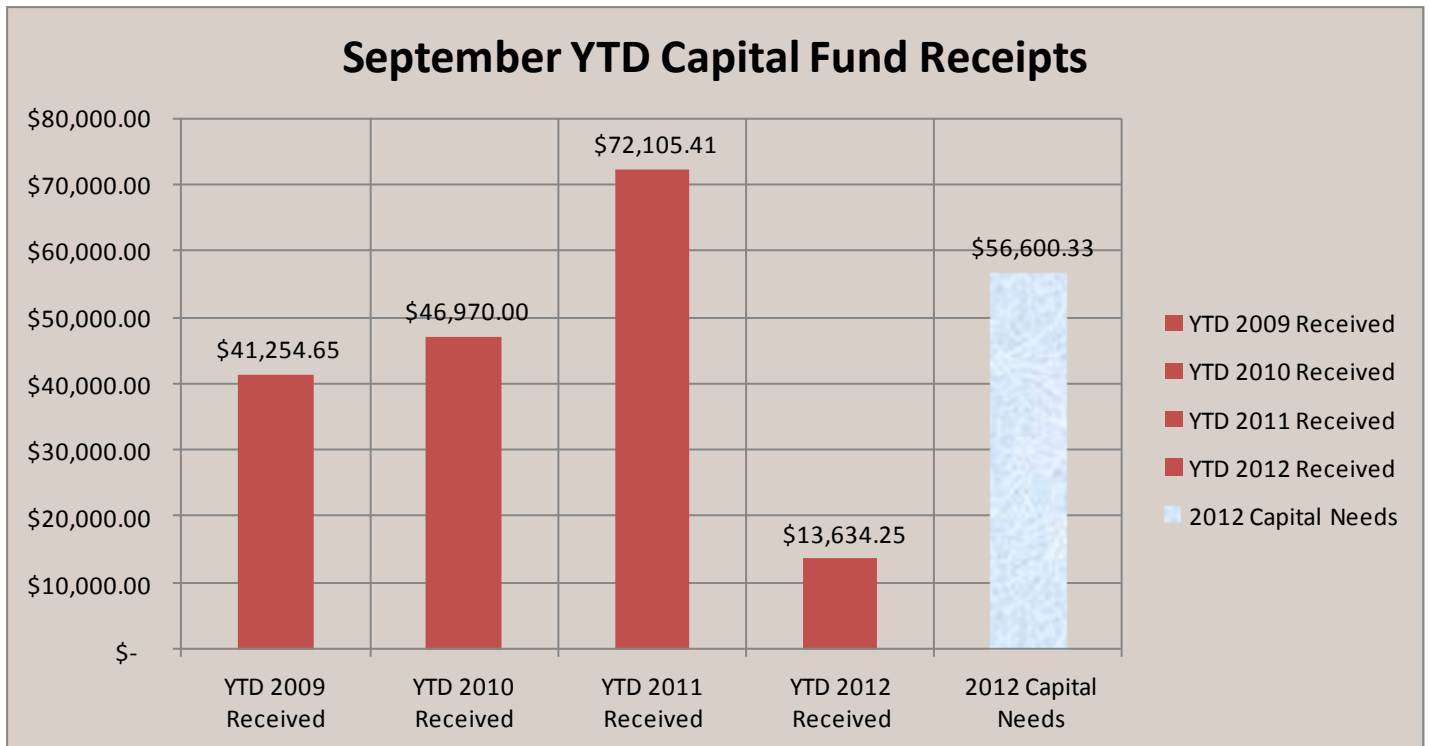
General Fund receipts for September totaled \$13,553.59 as compared to the budget of \$15,337.28, while General Fund disbursements for September totaled \$9,918.70. September year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$122,890.21 as compared to the budget of \$123,018.12 (a shortfall of \$127.91), while September year to date disbursements of \$110,063.91 were \$12,954.21 below budget. Through the end of September, the General Fund has increased by \$13,000.48. The increase in the General Fund was due to a shortfall in disbursements as compared to the budget. Year to date General Fund receipts for September were 4.3% above last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 2.9% above the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for September totaled \$1,254.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (a shortfall of \$239.75). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through September totaled \$13,333.95 and were below budget by \$109.80. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts.

September Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$13,634.25. The outstanding Promissory Notes balance was \$48,000.00 as of the end of September 2012. During the remainder of the year, \$43,000.00 is yet scheduled to mature on these notes. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving through September for the years indicated in the graph as well as the 2012 Total Capital Fund needs for the year in the last column. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for past indebtedness on the building and equipment of the local church as well as current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.)

September YTD Benevolence Receipts





Apple Valley Men's Retreat

Apple Valley Church and New Hope Presbyterian Church in Green Bay are jointly sponsoring a **Men's Retreat** on Feb 8-9, 2013 at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI. We would like to extend an invitation the men of the church who would be interested in attending. The speaker will be Rev. Bruce Hollister, pastor of New Covenant Community Church in New Lenox, IL on the subject of "Prayer, Communion with Christ, our Highest Privilege" and the cost is \$70. If you are interested or would like more information, let Pastor Brian know & he can give you a copy of the retreat brochure with more information on it. Thank you for considering this opportunity and we hope you will be able to join us in February.



June 11, 1970 is the 34th birthday of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. To commemorate the event, we present this paper written for a Church History assignment by Daniel DeMaster, a member of the freshman class of the Sheboygan County Christian High School and a covenant member of Bethel Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Oostburg, Wisconsin.

THERE IS A REASON FOR THE O.P.C.

June 11, 1936 is an important date to the members of a certain, rather small church. The date is important because that was when that church was established. The church is important because I am a member of it.

This church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, or O.P.C. for short, is unlike some churches for it has remained true to the Bible and its truths. The O.P.C. holds to the Reformed Faith, also called Calvinism, which teaches the sovereignty of God. The Reformed Faith goes back to the Apostle Paul. If this Reformed Faith goes back so far, it cannot be something that man has added to Christianity; it is Christianity.

But since Christianity has been around for just about two thousand years, what makes this recent denomination so special? Perhaps the importance of the O.P.C. can be shown in how and why it was established.

The church from which the O.P.C. came out was the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This church started out holding very strongly to the gospel, but slowly through the years liberalism had crept in. Most of the following events which happened could not have been predicted to let this spiritual disease in. If they could have been they surely would have been avoided.

It all started in 1801 with a plan of union between the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. They wanted to work together so that the Western settlers could form churches together. I doubt if it was worth it, though, since this union had a disastrous effect.

During the thirty-six years of union the New School Theology crept into the Presbyterian Church from the Congregationalist. This Theology differed from Presbyterian creeds in that it denied original sin and taught universal atonement. Since the doctrines that they differed with are necessary for salvation, you can see the gravity of the situation. There were even two seminaries that taught the New School Theology - Auburn and Union.

In 1903 the Cumberland Presbyterian Church merged with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. To be able to do this the Presbyterians had to change their creeds for the Cumberland Presbyterians were Arminians. Arminianism holds to the main doctrines of Christianity, but still the Presbyterians had to give up some biblical beliefs and no merger is worth this.

There is also the problem of where to draw the line. How many creeds can we afford to give up? This is exactly the problem that the Presbyterians had. In 1918-20, they developed a creedal basis that would allow modernists in the church legally. This was definitely going too far.

Before this school year, I thought of modernism as something that disturbed easily-excited ministers of our denomination. But now I think of modernism as the twentieth-century idolatry, for it really worships man and his reasoning power. The modernists think that they can say that the Bible is wrong because certain

things in it cannot be explained by physics or chemistry. On this basis, they deny the substitutionary atonement of Christ, Christ's bodily resurrection, His miracles, His virgin birth, and thus, the infallibility of the Scriptures.

In 1923 the above doctrines were stated to be essential by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.. But in that very same year thirteen hundred ministers signed the Auburn Affirmation which was a protest against this act of the General Assembly. By signing that document they declared themselves heretics, yet there was no action against them.

During all this time one of the thirteen seminaries of the Presbyterian Church had remained entirely orthodox. Princeton Seminary turned out about forty to fifty ministers each year or about one-fourth of the new ministers of the denomination. In 1929 the seminary was reorganized to fit modernistic views. Now it was impossible to receive an orthodox training within the seminaries of the church. This is why Westminster Theological Seminary was established in Philadelphia as a thoroughly orthodox seminary.

In 1932 it was discovered that the foreign missions board had two signers of the Auburn Affirmation on it. It was also found that some of the missionaries that were sent out were modernists and were not devoted to Christ. Yet nothing was done. So in 1933 J. Gresham Machen led a group of ministers and elders in forming a new missions board independent of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

The 1934 General Assembly issued a mandate stating that anyone not supporting the authorized missionary program is like one who refuses to partake of the Lord's Supper. Dr. Machen and the others who supported his views ignored this mandate for it had put the words of men as equal to the Bible.

So far we have seen how the Modernists were allowed in the church and how they gradually got control of the seminaries, foreign missions board, and the General Assemblies. The only thing left was to throw the orthodox men out of the church and this was to come only two years later.

It happened when Dr. Machen was convicted by his presbytery of disturbing the peace of the church. This charge was based on his ignoring the mandate concerning the matter of supporting the authorized missions board. Machen then appealed to the General Assembly but was refused. In the previous events the church had said in effect that it was to be obeyed whether it was right or wrong. So Dr. Machen was relieved of the church's ministry. Other orthodox men were also convicted and suspended from the ministry.

On June 11, 1936, a new denomination was formed separate from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. forever.

Someone has portrayed this conflict of churches against sin as firemen fighting a fire. They don't stop in the thick of the battle to discuss the most efficient way to put it out (discussion in doctrinal differences). But if they see someone pouring gasoline on the fire, you can be sure they'll say something (declaring them as heretics).

The establishment of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was not a glorious event. It was done with sorrow because the founders could not forget that Presbyterian Church which was once so strong and true, but now practically dead. But it was done with a bright hope for the future.

 (Reference material for this paper was taken in part from the following works: WHY THE O.P.C., John P. Galbraith; LEST WE FORGET, Edward Kellogg; WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?, J. Gresham Machen)

Craft & Bake Sale Donations Needed!

The annual Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary Craft & Bake Sale will be held on Saturday, December 1st. If there are some craft projects you have in mind that you may wish to contribute to this event, why not start on them now! If you have any questions, just speak with Ellen McNeese or Sue Gross. This year the sale will be held during "Main Street Memories" in Sheboygan Falls.

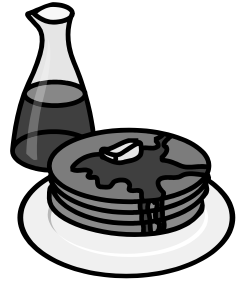


Harvest Home Supper

Our Annual Harvest Home Supper will be held on Saturday, November 10th at the church. Dinner will be served starting at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. A presentation by the Rev. John Hilbelink will follow.



Pumpkin Pancakes



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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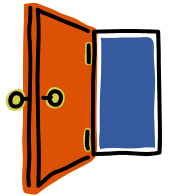


Spurgeon

Corner

*“Their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.”
(2 Chronicles 30:27)*

Prayer is the never-failing resort of the Christian in any case, in every plight. When you cannot use your sword you may take to the weapon of all-**prayer**. Your powder may be damp, your bow-string may be relaxed, but the weapon of all-**prayer** need never be out of order. Leviathan laughs at the javelin, but he trembles at **prayer**. Sword and spear need furbishing, but **prayer** never rusts, and when we think it most blunt it cuts the best. **Prayer** is an open door which none can shut. Devils may surround you on all sides, but the way upward is always open, and as long as that road is unobstructed, you will not fall into the enemy's hand. We can never be taken by blockade, escalade, mine, or storm, so long as heavenly succours can come down to us by Jacob's ladder to relieve us in the time of our necessities. **Prayer** is never out of season: in summer and in winter its merchandise is precious. **Prayer** gains audience with heaven in the dead of night, in the midst of business, in the heat of noonday, in the shades of evening. In every condition, whether of poverty, or sickness, or obscurity, or slander, or doubt, your covenant God will welcome your **prayer** and answer it from His holy place. Nor is **prayer** ever *futile*. True **prayer** is evermore true power. You may not always get what you ask, but you shall always have your real wants supplied. When God does not answer His children according to the letter, He does so according to the spirit. If thou askest for coarse meal, wilt thou be angered because He gives thee the finest flour? If thou seekest bodily health, shouldst thou complain if instead thereof He makes thy sickness turn to the healing of spiritual maladies? Is it not better to have the cross sanctified than removed? This evening, my soul, forget not to offer thy **petition** and **request**, for the Lord is ready to grant thee thy desires.



Evening, November 3, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon

Front Page Concluded

...vote your conscience – take part in the political process by exercising your rights as a citizen. It is a responsibility that you should embrace!

“But Pastor, if God is in charge, why should I vote?” You should vote because God uses means to accomplish His sovereign and holy will! In our case, voting is the means God uses to set apart the next group of leaders for our nation.

Beyond doubt, there will be many broken hearts on the morning of November 7. For every candidate who wins election, there will be those who have lost

their bid for office. What should you do if some of your choices aren't elected to service? Here is my advice: remember that God is in charge! He does all things well, even though His ways don't always make perfect sense to us. Trust the God who rules and overrules, and live faithfully for Him in the days to come!

Our ultimate happiness and confidence is not in men. Put no trust in princes, nor for help on man depend – they will die, to dust returning and their purposes shall end! Put your hope in God alone and you will never be disappointed!